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TESTIMONY OF CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION REGARDING H.B. 5218 , AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
MARCH 1, 2012**

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Urban, members of the Select Committee on Children; my name is Jennifer Allis Vazquez. I am a registered nurse, a mother of two, a graduate student in Public Health Nursing and a policy intern with the Connecticut Public Health Association. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA). CPHA is pleased to support ***H.B. 5218, An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products***, which would ban the sale, manufacturing or distribution of any children's products containing Tris fire retardants in the State of Connecticut. This act would protect the health of children in Connecticut by further reducing their exposure to chlorinated Tris.

Tris flame-retardants (TCEP, TDCPP and TCPP) are a family of flame-retardants used in many baby products and household furniture. Tris flame-retardants have been found in household dust and air as well as in water supplies [3]. Chlorinated Tris (TDCPP) was banned from use in children's clothing in 1977 after it was found by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission to be a probable carcinogen in laboratory studies [1]. The chemical is still widely used in many baby products such as changing table pads, sleep positioners, portable mattresses, baby carriers, rocking chairs, high chairs and home furnishings. Due to its chemical makeup, chlorinated Tris escapes from the foam padding in these products and settles in household dust, thus exposing children and adults through inhalation or ingestion [3]. Children are especially prone to exposure through crawling or placing hands in their mouths.

In 2006, the Consumer Product and Safety Commission found that chlorinated Tris poses a threat to human health, designating the chemical as a probable carcinogen [5]. Chlorinated Tris has been shown to be a neurotoxin to brain cells in animal studies—animals exposed to Tris were noted to have decreased memory, learning deficits, altered motor behavior and hyperactivity [4]. Due to ethical issues, no human studies have been conducted; however, animal studies have demonstrated multiple health effects such as increased incidence of liver, renal, testicular, and adrenal tumors after exposure to chlorinated Tris [3]. Animal research also suggests that multiple Tris chemicals can negatively affect hormone levels and semen quality including sperm count, motility and morphology in males [6].

The use of Tris flame-retardants is legal and unrestricted in the United States although individual states are beginning to place bans on chlorinated Tris and the other Tris chemicals. California has recognized chlorinated Tris as a carcinogen and placed the chemical on its Proposition 65 list in 2011 [8]. TCEP was identified as a substance of very high concern by the European Chemicals Agency in 2009 [7] while Canada has identified it as a risk to human health in any dose and a ban on the chemical is currently being considered [11]. Maryland and Washington are also considering bans on Tris flame-retardants during this legislative session and New York signed a ban into law in 2011.

Affordable and equally effective flame-retardants are widely available. Products are treated with flame-retardants based on outdated flammability standards set in the State of California [9]. Other than car seats, baby and children's products have no standard to be treated with flame-retardants [9]. Studies suggest that foam padding treated with these flame-retardants have no significant difference in ignition or flame spread [12]. The risks of continued use of Tris flame-retardants outweigh any potential benefit.

CPHA supports **H.B. 5218, *An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products***. Scientific research shows that Tris flame-retardants pose a health risk to humans and animals. Due to the routes of exposure to Tris chemicals (ingestion, inhalation), children are more vulnerable to the toxic effects of the chemical. Other states and countries have recognized the toxicity of this chemical and have taken steps to protect their citizens. With an absence of federal

action on chemical reform, Connecticut needs to continue to be a leader in chemical reform and ban Tris chemicals in consumer products.

Thank you.

Jennifer Allis Vazquez, BSN RN CPTC

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